

Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL MILAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 11470

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IT

SUBJECT: MILAN CITY DELEGATION TO ATTEND LA SCALA OPENING
IN WASHINGTON

REF: MILAN 1594

1. REFTEL DESCRIBES A SITUATION THAT WOULD BETTER HAVE BEEN AVOIDED. THE TRIP COULD PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO THE PCI FOR SOME PUBLICITY IN THE US AS WELL AS AN OCCASION FOR THE LEFT PRESS IN ITALY TO AGAIN SEE A SIGN OF CHANGE IN US POLICY TOWARD THE PCI. HOWEVER, THE TRIP IS, IN EFFECT, AN OFFICIAL ONE (MILAN SHARES WITH THE GOI CONTROL AND FINANCING OF LA SCALA) BY ELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND CAN CORRECTLY BE REPRESENTED AS SUCH TO THE ITALIAN AND AMERICAN PUBLICS. MOREOVER, THE PCI OFFICIALS INVOLVED ARE NOT IMPORTANT IN THE NATIONAL PARTY.

2. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING CHOICES: (A) REFUSE VISAS TO THE PCI MEMBERS; (B) LIMIT VISAS TO THE TWO PCI MEMBERS TO THE LA SCALA OPENING ONLY; AND (C) ISSUE WAIVERS AND VISAS FOR THE TWO PCI MEMBERS, BUT TAKE STEPS TO CIRCUMSCRIBE THEIR ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITY IN CONTACTS WITH AMERICAN OFFICIALDOM. REGRETFULLY, WE CONCLUDE THAT, SINCE PLANNING FOR THE VISIT OF ALL FIVE IS SO FAR ADVANCED, TO
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FOLLOW EITHER OF THE FIRST TWO ALTERNATIVES WOULD ON BALANCE

BE DISADVANTAGEOUS. THE SOCIALISTS WOULD BE MIGHTILY OFFENDED, AND THESE ARE THE SOCIALISTS (ALIGNED CLOSELY TO CRAXI) WHO REPRESENT THE ONLY REAL HOPE FOR THE SOCIALIST PARTY. IN ADDITION, THE ITALIAN PUBLIC WOULD FIND OUR DENIAL OF (OR SHARPLY LIMITING) VISAS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, AND WE CAN BE SURE THAT THE LEFT-DOMINATED PRESS WOULD LET THE PUBLIC KNOW ABOUT OUR ACTIONS. A VISA DENIAL TO A SENIOR PARTY OFFICIAL LIKE SEGRE WHO WANTS TO GO TO THE UNITED STATES ON AN ESSENTIALLY POLITICAL MISSION CAN BE UNDERSTOOD BY MANY, BUT A VISA DENIAL TO AN ELECTED LOCAL MILAN OFFICIAL TO GO TO THE OPENING OF MILAN'S LA SCALA IN WASHINGTON WOULD NOT BE.

3. THUS, WE RELUCTANTLY CONCLUDE THAT THE LEAST DAMAGING COURSE OF ACTION FOR OUR OVERALL INTERESTS WOULD BE TO ISSUE WAIVERS AND VISAS FOR THE TWO PCI MEMBERS SO THAT THE ENTIRE DELEGATION CAN MAKE THE TRIP TOGETHER. HOWEVER, IF THIS COURSE OF ACTION IS APPROVED, IT WOULD BE ESSENTIAL FOR MILAN TO MAKE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD TO TOGNOLI BEFORE THEY LEAVE THAT THE PCI WILL NOT BE INCLUDED IN ANY MEETINGS WITH USG OFFICIALS. FURTHER, WE WOULD STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT ALL LOCAL OFFICIALS AND BUSINESSMEN WHOM THE GROUP MIGHT SEE BE INFORMED BEFORE HAND THAT TWO PCI MEMBERS ARE INCLUDED AND BE PROVIDED WITH A CLEAR STATEMENT OF USG POLICY TOWARD THE PCI. EXPOSURE TO NON-OFFICIAL, GRASS-ROOTS AMERICAN OPPOSITION TO COMMUNISM MIGHT BE A USEFUL THING FOR ALL CONCERNED. VOLPE

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